

Chepstow Methodist Church Creation Care Action Plan

Introduction

We believe God calls us to care for all His creation with love. This is particularly challenging at this point in the human story as our world comes under increasing environmental strain from human activity and the growth in population. It is no longer a certainty that there is enough food and water to ensure all have what they need. We are at a tipping point of moving from the unfair distribution of resources as the cause of poverty to simply not being able to provide for everyone.

But we are a people of hope. And we believe that the Holy Spirit can inspire us locally and many, many more people globally to ensure that we take the necessary steps to look after God's creation and thereby create a world which more nearly reflects the Kingdom of God. We believe the challenges we face now, if approached prayerfully and guided by God, can be a turning point. Creation care can help us witness to the world the transforming power of the love of God and a real concern for all life.

"Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, as for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendents after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waves of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Genesis 9: 8-11

This plan sets out how we as a church community plan to allow God to transform our lives, individually and collectively. We recognise that many others in our local communities have been ahead of us in recognising the need to care for creation and so we seek to work with and learn from all within our local and global community who are already taking steps to care for the whole of creation.

"Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, The Kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, Look here it is or there it is For in fact, the kingdom of God is within you."

Luke 17: 20

Aims

The two aims of this plan are:

- to witness to the world through worship and action that God is love and cares for all creation
- to reduce the environmental stress we exert on the earth

Objectives

Over the next three years we want to achieve the following:

- Demonstrate that creation care is an essential element of Christian discipleship
- Reduce our carbon emissions

- Increase our recycling, including using more rain and dirty water.
- Reduce waste especially related to food production, preparation and packaging.
- Increase biodiversity

Outcomes

As a result of our prayer, worship and action we hope and believe that the changes we will see are:

- People in Chepstow say the church is engaged in creating a fairer, sustainable world
- Our contribution to climate change is less
- Essential resources are distributed more fairly
- Food security is greater
- More insect life, especially bees, are present in Chepstow, supporting food security.

Demonstrate that creation care is an essential element of Christian discipleship

This objective is about our individual and collective discipleship and the resulting witness to the community in Chepstow and beyond that God is love and his love is for creation in its entirety. Over the three years we seek to support the members of our church community to deepen their knowledge of God's concern for his creation and to see action to look after creation as a fundamental part of faith. We hope that our local community of Chepstow will recognise our commitment in worship to creation and see the love of God at work.

Our three year targets are:

To show a year on year increase in the number of worshippers at Chepstow who consider creation care as a fundamental part of Christian discipleship.

To show a year on year increase in the number of worshippers who have taken action in the last 12 months to contribute to one of our ecocongregation objectives.

To be recognised as committed to creation care by Transition Chepstow, local Friends of the Earth and people who use the premises for non-church affiliated groups / meetings.

Action to deliver targets

Use CEL prayer diary during intercessions on Sunday, at dynamic prayer and include on website for individual use through the week.

Encounter to include creation care reflections three times a year.

Sunday services to use One World Week, Environment Sunday, FairTrade Fortnight and Harvest to highlight creation care.

All church groups to commit to Participating in one creation care action a year.

Two house groups a year to use the Green Bible Trail Guide.

Two copies of the Green Bible to be available in the church lending library.

How we will know we have succeeded

Annual surveys of worshippers will explore attitudes and action relating to creation care. After three years 80% respondents will rate creation care as a fundamental part of Christian discipleship and have taken action.

Annual survey of users of Chepstow premises and local environmental groups shows 75% perceive the church community as committed to creation care.

Reduce our carbon emissions

This objective is about looking for ways that we can all reduce our carbon emissions. We aim to provide a range of ideas and support to help people just beginning to think about their carbon footprint as well as those who have been acting on this for a number of years. As well as taking practical action individually and in and around the church this objective is about raising awareness of the impact of climate change locally and globally. We hope to inspire a range of individuals to take more action to reduce their carbon footprint and in doing so to help develop their personal sustainability and resilience in response to climate change.

Our three year targets are:

Increase the percentage of the church's energy requirements met through self generation

Show a year on year increase in the number of members of the congregation who have taken action to reduce their carbon footprint

300 people have attended events to promote carbon reduction

Action to deliver targets

Insulate the roof above the church sanctuary

Develop a project to support vulnerable individuals to access grants for loft insulation and cavity wall insulation and accompany them whilst work is undertaken.

Host open debates for the local community (in partnership with FoE and Transition Chepstow) on the UK's energy strategy, the Severn barrage, redevelopment of Oldbury on Severn Nuclear power station and self generation.

Hold an event to promote ethical investment including green energy (in partnership with Transition Chepstow)

Recruit six members of the congregation to undertake two week challenges and write about their experiences of taking action to reduce carbon footprint.

Publicise members' tips on simple actions they take to reduce their carbon footprint.

How we will know we have succeeded

x % of church's energy is provided through self generation.

Congregational surveys show by year 3, 50% of the congregation have taken at least one new action to reduce their carbon footprint in the last year and 80% in the 3 years.

Evaluation of events show 25% of people have taken action following the event.

Increase our recycling, including water.

Whilst we have been recycling much of our waste as part of Monmouthshire's recycling schemes, we believe we can do more to promote this amongst people and groups using our premises. We want to think about our water use too. Saving rainwater and using it appropriately helps build resilience and sustainability here in Chepstow and globally. We expect to take action individually, on our church premises and to financially support the Triangle project in Kenya to create a sustainable water supply.

Our three year targets are:

The maximum possible recycling, including use of rainwater, is regularly taking place on church premises.

Show a year on year increase in the number of members of the congregation who have taken action to increase recycling including water.

Fund rainwater tank and purification equipment for the Triangle Project in Kenya and ensure it is operational all year round.

Action to deliver targets

Install water butt on church premises to capture water from roof.

Fundraise for Triangle project.

Provide clearer signage and access to recycling facilities on church premises for all users.

Recruit three members of the congregation to undertake two week challenges and write about their experiences of taking action to increase recycling.

Publicise members' tips on simple actions they take to recycle.

How we will know we have succeeded

100% of people and groups using church premises know how to recycle and do recycle.

100% plant watering achieved with captured rainwater.

Congregational surveys show by year 3, 50% of the congregation have taken at least one new action to increase their recycling in the last year and 80% in the 3 years.

The Triangle project has a functioning, consistent water supply 24 / 7 all year round.

Reduce waste especially related to food production, preparation and packaging.

Food is a hugely important part of our lives. Not only is it essential for life; it also plays a massive role in shaping our landscape through food production, socially supporting our family life and friendships and globally provides or denies millions a fair return for their work. Sourcing and using food wisely must be a key component of living a Gospel life. We want to explore what this means in Chepstow. This includes looking at using locally produced food and helping people to develop their food preparation skills.

Our three year targets are:

Increase the number of people buying food locally

Increase the food preparation skills of the local community and reduce food wastage

Reduce the amount of packaging used for food purchases

Action to deliver targets

Run tours visiting local food producers

Continue to provide the food cooperative

Develop the opportunity to swap home grown produce as part of food coop

Continue to promote fair trade by providing the Traidcraft stall

Develop and run some cooking skills evenings to help people use their food coop bags or organic boxes effectively

Recruit three members of the congregation to undertake two week challenges and write about their experiences of taking action to use more locally sourced food.

Publicise members' tips on sourcing and preparing local food.

How we will know we have succeeded

Increase uptake of food coop year on year to x participants by end year three

100 people have participated in cooking or producer visits each year

Surveys show 50% of people participating in events have taken action following the event.

Increase biodiversity

We all appreciate the colour and uplifting nature of beautiful flowers and trees but gradually we are becoming aware of the critical role biodiversity plays in sustaining our ecosystems. Around the church there are limited planting opportunities but already there are flowers in hanging baskets and containers around the front of the church and we want to increase planting around the building of pollen rich flowers to support insect life. We also want to reduce the impact on our environment of household chemicals as increased toxicity in the environment has been linked to reducing biodiversity.

Our three year targets are:

Increase pollen and nectar rich planting around the church

Contribute to biodiversity protection or development work in a developing country

Reduce use of toxic household cleaning products

Action to deliver targets

Continue to grow flowers at front of church.

Enter partnership with coop to have nectar rich planting in the raised beds around the back of the church.

Run tours visiting local food producers including organic and environmentally aware producers.

Run an environmentally themed games event.

Recruit three members of the congregation to undertake two week challenges and write about their experiences of taking action to promote diversity.

Publicise members' tips on promoting biodiversity.

How we will know we have succeeded

Coop planters are full of bee and insect supporting flowers and plants

100 raised for 100 churches campaign

In surveys, 25% of the congregation use non toxic environmentally friendly cleaning products.